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Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Uttlesford District Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in July 2012.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
24 July 2012	Consultation on council size
23 October 2012	Invitation to submit proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
15 January 2013	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
16 April 2013	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
9 July 2013	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

We proposed a council size of 39 members, comprising a pattern of seven single-member wards, 10 two-member wards and four three-member wards. The recommendations were broadly based on the Council's proposals, but amended to reflect our statutory criteria. Our draft recommendations for Uttlesford District Council sought to reflect the evidence of community identities received while ensuring good electoral equality and providing for effective and convenient local government.

Submissions received

During the consultation on our draft recommendations, the Commission received 40 submissions. Over half of the submissions put forward comments on our proposal for a three-member Stansted North ward. The remainder put forward comments on our proposals across the district, some in support and some in opposition. The WeAreResidents.org group queried the electorate forecasts for Saffron Walden. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

Uttlesford District Council ('the Council') submitted electorate forecasts for 2018, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in

2013. The Council initially forecast a high electorate growth of 18%. We had concerns over whether this would be realised and as a result the Council reduced its forecasts to 11%. During the consultation on our draft recommendations, the WeAreResidents.org group expressed concern about the forecast electorate figures, particularly in Saffron Walden. We asked the Council to revisit its electoral projections, however it stated that these were the best estimates available at the time and that they had been based on Office for National Statistics data with housing projections factored in. We have also examined the impact of the growth in these polling districts and, while the electorate has grown slightly beyond what was predicted for 2018, we note that within the town of Saffron Walden as a whole the growth is still within the Council's predictions. Therefore, on balance, we remain satisfied with the Council's projections and are using them as the basis of the final recommendations.

General analysis

Throughout the review process, the primary consideration has been to achieve good electoral equality, while seeking to reflect community identities and securing effective and convenient local government. Having considered the submissions received during consultation on our draft recommendations, we have sought to reflect community identities and improve the levels of electoral fairness. Our final recommendations take account of submissions received during consultation on our draft recommendations. As a result, we have proposed boundary amendments to our Stansted North, Takeley and Hatfield & Broad Oak & the Hallingburys wards.

Our final recommendations for Uttlesford are that the Council should have 39 members, with eight single-member wards, 11 two-member wards and three three-member wards. One ward would have an electoral variance of greater than 10% by 2018.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Uttlesford. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament and will be implemented subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Uttlesford, in 2015.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views and advice. The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk

You can also view our final recommendations for Uttlesford District Council on our interactive maps at consultation.lgbce.org.uk

1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Uttlesford District Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 The submission received from Uttlesford District Council during the initial stage of consultation of this review informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Uttlesford*, which were published on 16 April 2013. We then undertook a further period of consultation, which ended on 8 July 2013.

What is an electoral review?

3 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

4 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation¹ and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why are we conducting a review in Uttlesford?

5 We decided to conduct this review because, based on the December 2010 electorate figures, 37% of the existing wards have 10% more or fewer electors per councillor than the district average. In addition, Felsted ward had 43% more electors than the district average

How will the recommendations affect you?

6 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish council wards you vote in. Your ward name may also change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. The names or boundaries of parishes will not change as a result of our recommendations.

¹ Schedule 2 to The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

7 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Sir Tony Redmond
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and final recommendations

Submissions received

8 Prior to, and during, the initial stage of the review, we visited Uttlesford District Council (the Council) and met with members, parish council representatives and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received two submissions on council size: one from the Council and another from the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council. During the first stage of consultation on ward boundaries, we received 54 submissions, including one from the Council. During the consultation on the draft recommendations we received 40 submissions. All submissions may be inspected at our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

9 As part of this review, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2018. The Council initially forecast an increase of 18% in electorate over the period 2012 to 2018. While we acknowledged that Uttlesford is subject to considerable growth, we were concerned that this level of growth was unrealistic based on the evidence received and was unlikely to be met during the forecast period. We therefore asked the Council to revisit its methodology. As a result, the Council revised down its forecast to 11% (increasing from 62,335 to 69,196 by 2018).

10 At Stage One, although we considered this figure still to be high, we noted that it was broadly in line with Office for National Statistics (ONS) forecasts for population. In addition, the Council provided evidence of development sites. Therefore, having considered the information provided by the Council, we were satisfied that the projected figures were the best available at the time and used these figures as the basis of our draft recommendations.

11 At Stage Three, the WeAreResidents.org group expressed concern about the forecast electorate figures, particularly in the Saffron Walden area. They argued that the Council had used 'inaccurate or out-of-date' data, citing that in two polling districts the 2013 electorate had already grown beyond the Council's 2018 projections. They stated that the projected growth for Saffron Walden was lower than for the district as a whole, despite being a key area for future housing growth. A number of other respondents questioned whether the Council was in a position to provide accurate housing projections at this time, with one suggesting that the review should be delayed.

12 We note the concerns over the electorate projections, particularly in the Saffron Walden area. We asked the Council to revisit its electorate projections and it stated that these were the best estimates available at the time and that the projections had been based on ONS data with housing projections factored in. We have also examined the impact of the growth in these polling districts and, while the electorate has grown slightly beyond what was predicted for 2018, we note that within the town of Saffron Walden as a whole the growth is still within the Council's predictions. Therefore, overall growth in the area is within what was originally projected. In addition, despite the slightly higher growth in a number of polling districts, our proposed boundaries would still secure good electoral equality.

13 We also note the more general comments about electoral projections and the suggestions that the review be halted until the projections are more stable. However, we do not consider sufficient evidence has been provided to suggest that the Council's projections are inaccurate beyond normal expectations. Therefore, on balance, we remain satisfied with the Council's projections and are using them as the basis of the final recommendations.

Council size

14 The Council currently has 44 councillors elected from 27 district wards, comprising 14 single-member, nine two-member and four three-member wards. During preliminary discussions on council size, the Council proposed a council size of between 38 and 40 members. It provided evidence on its governance and management structure, overview and scrutiny functions, regulatory functions and its standards committee. It also provided evidence on elector engagement and working in the community. Finally, it considered member involvement in external bodies as well as member time commitment and partnership working. It concluded that fewer members are involved directly in day-to-day decision making, but the Council must retain sufficient councillor capacity to perform the regulatory, overview and scrutiny functions.

15 The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council argued for a 35-member council, rejecting the Council's proposal for between 38 to 40 members. It argued that 35 members would give the council a councillor-to-electors ratio 'in line' with the average for England and also reflect officer estimates that the Council could effectively function with between 34 to 36 members.

16 We considered that the Council put forward strong evidence for a council size of between 38 and 40 members. We were therefore minded to adopt a council size of 39 members and went out to consultation on this number. In response to the consultation, the Council and the Liberal Democrat Group restated their original position. We also received a mixture of support and objections from parish councils and local residents. We did not consider that sufficient evidence was received to support an alternative council size. We therefore adopted the Council's proposed council size as the basis of consultation on warding arrangements.

17 In response to the draft recommendations we received a few very general comments on council size and the role of councillors. However, none of these submissions provided any additional evidence that would persuade us to move away from a council size of 39. We have therefore decided to base our final recommendations on this number of elected members.

Electoral fairness

18 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

19 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The district average is calculated by dividing the total

electorate of the district (62,335 in 2012 and 69,196 by 2018) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 39 under our final recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 1,598 in 2012 and 1,774 by 2018.

20 Under our final recommendations, only one ward, Takeley, with 12% fewer electors per councillor, would have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for the district by 2018. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for Uttlesford.

General analysis

21 During consultation on the draft recommendations, we received 40 submissions on warding arrangements for Uttlesford. The Council put forward comments on a number of areas. Twenty-one of the submissions we received put forward comments on the Stort Valley and Stansted area. We also received four submissions on the Takeley and Broad Oak & the Hallingburys areas. The remaining submissions put forward comments on specific areas.

22 We note that there were significant objections to our proposals for the creation of a three-member Stansted North ward, with particular objection to the inclusion of rural parishes with a more urban area. We consider that the evidence provided during the consultation on the draft recommendations is sufficient to demonstrate that a single-member Stort Valley ward, including Ugley parish, would better reflect local community identities. We are therefore moving away from our draft recommendations in this area.

23 In the Takeley area, we note the objections to the inclusion of the Bush End area of Hatfield Broad Oak parish in Takeley ward. Although retaining Bush End in the proposed Broad Oak & the Hallingburys ward would increase the electoral variance in Takeley from 10% to 12% by 2018, we consider this change would provide a better reflection of our statutory criteria, in particular the reflection of community identities. We are therefore moving away from our draft recommendations in this area. We note that a similar argument was put forward for retaining the Little Walden area of Saffron Walden in a Saffron Walden ward. However, doing so would worsen electoral equality in Ashdon ward from 5% fewer to 16% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. Although we note that the area is part of Saffron Walden parish, we do not consider there to be sufficient evidence to support such a high electoral variance.

24 In the remainder of the district we note a number of objections to our draft recommendations, including a number of our recommended ward names. While we do not consider there to be sufficient evidence to justify changing our proposed ward boundaries, we do propose a number of ward name changes.

25 Our final recommendations are for eight single-member, 11 two-member and three three-member wards. We consider that our final recommendations provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

26 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table A1 (on pages 20–21) and on the large map accompanying this report.

Electoral arrangements

27 This section of the report details the submissions we have received, our consideration of them, and our final recommendations for each area of Uttlesford. The following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- Saffron Walden and the north west area (pages 8–9)
- Stansted and the west area (pages 9–11)
- Hatfield, the Rodings and the Dunmows (pages 11–12)
- Elsenham, the Hallingburys, the Eastons, Thaxted and Takeley (pages 12–13)

28 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 20–21 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Saffron Walden and the north west area

29 Saffron Walden is in the north of Uttlesford and surrounded by rural parishes to its north and west. Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Council's proposals, subject to a minor amendment to strengthen the ward boundaries between the proposed Saffron Walden Castle and Saffron Walden Shire wards. We proposed single-member Ashdon, Debden & Wimbish and The Sampfords wards which would have 5% fewer, 6% more and 6% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively. We proposed two-member Saffron Walden Audley and Saffron Walden Castle wards which would have 2% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively. Finally, we proposed a three-member Saffron Walden Shire ward which would have 3% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

30 During the consultation on the draft recommendations we received a number of objections to our proposals for this area. The Council and a number of residents objected to the inclusion of the Little Walden area of Saffron Walden parish in Ashdon ward. It was argued that the area is part of Saffron Walden parish and should remain with the rest of the parish for district warding purposes. The WeAreResidents.org group questioned the Council's electorate forecasts for the Saffron Walden area.

31 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the objections to the inclusion of Little Walden in Ashdon ward. However, we do not consider that any respondent has put forward sufficiently strong evidence to justify a ward with an electoral variance of 16% by 2018. As stated in the draft recommendations, we are satisfied that the Little Walden area is more rural in nature and has good road links to Hadstock parish within our proposed Ashdon ward. Given this, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final.

32 We also note the concerns about the electorate projections for Saffron Walden. As stated in the electorate figures section (paragraphs 9–13), while we note these concerns, we consider that forecasting projected electorate is inexact, particularly at this time. We consider that for Saffron Walden as a whole the forecasting does not appear to be unreasonable and that our proposals still provide a good level of electoral equality. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for this area as final.

33 Our single-member Ashdon, Debden & Wimbish and The Sampfords wards would have 5% fewer, 6% more and 6% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively. Our two-member Saffron Walden Audley and Saffron Walden Castle wards would have 2% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively. Finally, our three-member Saffron Walden Shire ward would have 3% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

34 Our final recommendations for this area can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 20–21) and on Map accompanying this report.

Stansted and the west area

35 Stansted lies to the south west of the district. To the north-west are a number of rural parishes. Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Council's proposals, but subject to significant amendment around the proposed Chesterford & Littlebury and Elmdon & Wenden wards, and Stort Valley and Stansted North wards. We moved away from its proposal to divide Littlebury parish between two wards, instead proposing the creation of a two-member Chesterford & Elmdon ward with 1% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. We also moved away from its proposed Stort Valley ward because we noted that Ugley parish did not have any direct road links into the proposed ward. Given the limited options, we considered that the creation of a three-member Stansted North ward provided the best solution. We acknowledged that this would combine the more rural Stort Valley area with urban Stansted town.

36 We proposed a single-member Clavering ward which would have 4% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. We also proposed two-member Chesterford & Elmdon, Newport and Stansted South wards which would have 1% more, 9% fewer and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively. Finally, we proposed a three-member Stansted North ward which would have 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

37 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received significant objections to our proposed three-member Stansted North ward. We received over 20 submissions objecting to this ward, including submissions from Sir Alan Haselhurst MP (Saffron Walden), Councillor Dean (Stansted South), Councillor Loughlin (Stort Valley), Manuden Parish Council, Farnham Parish Council, Berden Parish Council and Saffron Walden Constituency Liberal Democrats. All objected to the creation of this three-member ward. Most of these submissions stated that Stort Valley is of a rural nature and should not be put in a ward with the more urban Stansted area. They also stated that if they shared community links with any urban area it was not Stansted, but rather Bishop's Stortford which lies outside the district. In addition, a large number of respondents argued in favour of the Council's original proposal to transfer Ugley parish to its proposed Stort Valley ward, citing its similar rural nature. However, an Ugley parish councillor requested that Ugley parish be retained in a ward with Stansted. Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council also objected to the creation of a three-member Stansted North ward, but requested that Ugley parish be retained in a Stansted ward. It also argued in the event that its proposals were

supported, that the boundary between Stansted North and Stansted South wards would need to be slightly amended to ensure electoral equality between them.

38 The Council did not propose any amendments to ward boundaries for this area, but did propose that our Chesterford & Elmdon ward be renamed Littlebury, Chesterford & Wenden Lofts, and that Stansted South ward be renamed Stansted South & Birchanger. Two local residents objected to any proposal to divide Littlebury parish between wards.

39 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the strong objections to the proposal to create a three-member Stansted North ward. We proposed this ward as part of our draft recommendations because we did not wish to include Ugley parish with Stort Valley as they do not share direct road links. We acknowledged that our proposed Stansted North ward combined the rural Stort Valley parishes with the more urban Stansted area, but considered this preferable to a ward where one of the constituent parishes did not have road links to other parishes in the proposed ward.

40 However, we received significant objections to the three-member Stansted North ward from the Stort Valley parish councils and a number of other respondents. We also note their preference for the inclusion of Ugley parish in Stort Valley ward. We note that this is contrary to the request of Ugley Parish Council at Stage One. We note that it is also contrary to the Stage Three submissions from an Ugley parish councillor and Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council which requested that Ugley remain in a ward with Stansted.

41 Although we note there is some support for Ugley parish remaining in a ward with the Stansted Mountfitchet area, we also note that it is not possible to create a pattern of wards that would secure good electoral equality and reflect both the preferred warding arrangements of the Stort Valley parishes and Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council. While our concern remains that the road links between Ugley parish and Stort Valley ward would run outside the ward, we note that the distances are not far. In addition, these concerns must be set against the strength of concern and evidence provided by the rural Stort Valley parishes about being linked to the urban Stansted area.

42 On balance, we consider that the objections to the creation of a three-member ward combining rural and urban areas outweigh the concerns about the road links between Ugley parish and the Stort Valley parishes. We therefore propose moving away from our draft recommendations to create a single-member Stort Valley ward comprising Berden, Farnham, Manuden and Ugley parishes. Our Stort Valley ward would have 7% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. As a result we do not propose any other amendment to the boundary between Stansted North and Stansted South wards. The revised Stansted North ward, comprising the north area of Stansted Mountfitchet parish, would have 1% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

43 We note that a number of respondents objected to any proposal to divide Littlebury parish between district wards. Our draft recommendations placed the whole of Littlebury parish in our Chesterford & Elmdon ward. We are therefore confirming the proposed ward as final subject to renaming it Littlebury, Chesterford & Wenden Lofts as requested by the Council, which it argued reflected the main settlements in the area and the long-used name of Wenden Lofts. Finally, we propose renaming

Stansted South ward as Stansted South & Birchanger ward, as proposed by the Council. We do not propose any other amendments to our draft recommendations for this area and are therefore confirming them as final.

44 Our single-member Clavering ward and Stort Valley ward would have 4% more and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. Our two-member Littlebury, Chesterford & Wenden Lofts, Newport, Stansted North and Stansted South & Birchanger wards would have 1% more, 9% fewer, 1% fewer and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively.

45 Our final recommendations for this area can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 20–21) and on the Map accompanying this report.

Hatfield, the Rodings and the Dunmows

46 This area lies to the south of the district. Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Council's proposals, but subject to significant amendment around its Felsted & Flitch Green and Stebbings wards and a minor amendment to its Great Dunmow North wards. We proposed the single-member wards of Hatfield Heath, High Easter & the Rodings and Little Dunmow & Flitch Green which would have 3% more, 5% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. We proposed the two-member wards of Great Dunmow North and Felsted & Stebbings which would have 7% more and 4% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively. Finally, we proposed a three-member Great Dunmow South ward which would have 6% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively.

47 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, Stebbing Parish Council objected to our proposal to place it in a ward with Felsted parish, arguing that it had stronger links to Lindsell parish to the north. It argued that the best road links between Stebbing and Felsted either ran outside the district or through the proposed Little Dunmow & Flitch Green ward. The Council did not put forward any objections to the draft recommendations, except for suggesting that our Little Dunmow & Flitch Green ward be renamed Flitch Green & Little Dunmow and Great Dunmow South ward be renamed Great Dunmow South & Barnston.

48 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note that Stebbing Parish Council objected to the proposal to place it in a ward with Felsted parish and cited links to Lindsell. However, we also note that Lindsell Parish Meeting (discussed below), while acknowledging some links to Stebbing, cited stronger links to Thaxted. As stated in the draft recommendations, the alternatives are limited. In light of this and the comments of Lindsell Parish Meeting we are confirming our draft recommendations for Felsted & Stebbing ward as final. In the remainder of this area we are confirming our draft recommendations as final, subject to renaming Little Dunmow & Flitch Green ward as Flitch Green & Little Dunmow and Great Dunmow South ward as Great Dunmow South & Barnston, as proposed by the Council.

49 Our proposed single-member Hatfield Heath, High Easter & the Rodings and Flitch Green & Little Dunmow wards would have 3% more, 5% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. Our proposed two-member Great Dunmow North and Felsted & Stebbing wards would have 7% more and 4% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively. Finally,

our three-member Great Dunmow South & Barnston ward would have 6% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively.

50 Our final recommendations for this area can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 20–21) and on the Map accompanying this report.

Elsenham, the Hallingburys, the Eastons, Thaxted and Takeley

51 This area lies in the centre of the district. Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Council's proposals, without amendment. We proposed the two-member wards of Broad Oak & the Hallingburys, Elsenham & Henham, and Thaxted & the Eastons, which would have 6% fewer, 1% more and 8% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively. Finally, we proposed a three-member Takeley ward which would have 10% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

52 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received a number of objections to our proposals to put the Bush End area of Hatfield Broad Oak parish in our three-member Takeley ward. The Council, and Takeley, Hatfield Broad Oak, Great Hallingbury and Little Hallingbury parish councils all argued that this area is part of Hatfield Broad Oak parish and shares community links with the remainder of the parish. Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council also supplied a petition of the electors from the affected area who objected to the draft recommendations. The Council acknowledged that retaining this area in the Broad Oak & the Hallingburys ward would worsen electoral equality in Takeley ward to 12% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

53 Lindsell Parish Meeting expressed support for the draft recommendations to put it in a ward with Thaxted. It acknowledged that it had links to the church in Stebbing, but stated that its main links were to the school, surgery and shops in Thaxted.

54 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the objection to the proposal to place the Bush End area of Hatfield Broad Oak parish in Takeley ward. As stated in the draft recommendations, we explored options to avoid dividing Hatfield Broad Oak parish between district wards while also securing good electoral equality in Takeley. Accordingly, at that stage, we considered that separating Bush End and including it in a separate ward from the rest of Hatfield Broad Oak parish was the best option, in light of a lack of evidence to justify the 12% variance that this ward would have by 2018 under the alternative warding arrangement.

55 However, in light of the evidence received in response to the draft recommendations, including the submission from Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council, we consider that including the whole of Hatfield Broad Oak parish in the proposed Broad Oak & the Hallingburys ward is justified. We note that this would worsen electoral equality in the Takeley ward to 12%. However, we consider this acceptable given the strength of the argument to unite the parish. We note this affects approximately 100 electors in the Bush End area. As a result, Takeley ward would have 12% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, while the Broad Oak & the Hallingburys ward would have 3% fewer electors per councillor by 2018.

56 In the remainder of this area we are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

57 Our two-member Broad Oak & the Hallingburys, Elsenham & Henham, and Thaxted & the Eastons wards would have 3% fewer, 1% more and 8% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018, respectively. Our proposed three-member Takeley ward would have 12% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

58 Our final recommendations for this area can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 20–21) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

59 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2012 and 2018 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2012	2018
Number of councillors	39	39
Number of electoral wards	22	22
Average number of electors per councillor	1,598	1,774
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	6	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation

Uttlesford District Council should comprise 39 councillors serving 22 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

60 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

61 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for

principal authority warding arrangements. However, Uttlesford District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

62 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet.

63 Great Dunmow Parish Council is currently represented by 16 parish councillors representing two parish wards. As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Great Dunmow parish.

64 During the consultation on the draft recommendations, the Council questioned our allocation of councillors between North and South parish wards. It argued that North should have seven and South should have nine. We have looked at the figures and concur with the Council and are amending our draft recommendations to reflect this.

Final recommendations

Great Dunmow Parish Council should return 16 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: North (returning seven members); and South (returning nine members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map accompanying this report.

65 Saffron Walden Town Council is currently represented by 16 parish councillors, representing three parish wards. As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Saffron Walden parish.

Final recommendations

Saffron Walden Town Council should return 16 parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Audley (returning four members); Castle (returning four members); Little Walden (returning one member); and Shire (returning seven members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map accompanying this report.

66 Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council is currently represented by 15 members, representing two parish wards. As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Stansted Mountfitchet parish.

67 During the consultation on the draft recommendations, the Council expressed support for our allocation of councillors between the North and South parish wards of Stansted Mountfitchet. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendations

Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council should return 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: North (returning eight members); and South (returning seven members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map accompanying this report.

3 What happens next?

68 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Uttlesford District Council. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Uttlesford District Council in 2015.

Equalities

69 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the public sector equalities duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

4 Mapping

Final recommendations for Uttlesford

70 The following map illustrates our proposed ward boundaries for Uttlesford District Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Uttlesford District Council.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Uttlesford District Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for Uttlesford District Council

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ashdon	1	1,552	1,552	-3%	1,689	1,689	-5%
2 Broad Oak & the Hallingburys	2	3,167	1,584	-1%	3,435	1,718	-3%
3 Clavering	1	1,799	1,799	13%	1,844	1,844	4%
4 Debden & Wimbish	1	1,730	1,730	8%	1,883	1,883	6%
5 Elsenham & Henham	2	2,834	1,417	-11%	3,595	1,798	1%
6 Felsted & Stebbing	2	3,481	1,741	9%	3,684	1,842	4%
7 Flitch Green & Little Dunmow	1	1,618	1,618	1%	1,665	1,665	-6%
8 Great Dunmow North	2	2,974	1,487	-7%	3,813	1,907	7%
9 Great Dunmow South & Barnston	3	4,792	1,597	0%	5,664	1,888	6%
10 Hatfield Heath	1	1,699	1,699	6%	1,833	1,833	3%
11 High Easter & the Rodings	1	1,761	1,761	10%	1,860	1,860	5%
12 Littlebury, Chesterford & Wenden Lofts	2	3,332	1,666	4%	3,574	1,787	1%
13 Newport	2	2,753	1,377	-14%	3,240	1,620	-9%

Table A1 (cont): Final recommendations for Uttlesford District Council

Appendix A

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
14 Saffron Walden Audley	2	3,535	1,768	11%	3,627	1,814	2%
15 Saffron Walden Castle	2	3,056	1,528	-4%	3,328	1,664	-6%
16 Saffron Walden Shire	3	5,163	1,721	8%	5,483	1,828	3%
17 Stansted North	2	3,360	1,680	5%	3,497	1,749	-1%
18 Stansted South & Birchanger	2	2,887	1,444	-10%	3,440	1,720	-3%
19 Stort Valley	1	1,585	1,585	-1%	1,654	1,654	-7%
20 Takeley	3	3,902	1,301	-19%	4,685	1,562	-12%
21 Thaxted & the Eastons	2	3,617	1,809	13%	3,818	1,909	8%
22 The Sampfords	1	1,738	1,738	9%	1,885	1,885	6%
Totals	39	62,335	-	-	69,196	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,598	-	-	1,774	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Uttlesford District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward or division, expressed in parishes or existing wards or divisions, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections

Appendix A

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward

Appendix A

Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Appendix A

Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council
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